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STRUCTURE AS A DETERMINANT OF DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION.

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THE DEGREE OF OPERATIONAL DEMOCRACY WITHIN A JUNIOR COLLEGE AND, BY EXTENSION, WITHIN ANY SCHOOL OR COLLEGE IS LARGELY DEPENDENT UPON THE KIND OF ORGANIZATIONAL STRUCTURE WHICH IS ESTABLISHED. THE STRUCTURE AND MECHANICS MOST SUPPORTIVE TO THE DEMOCRATIC DEVELOPMENT OF THE COLLEGE AND ITS INSTRUCTIONAL PROGRAM SHOULD HAVE MAXIMAL OPPORTUNITY FOR THE INITIATION OR RECOMMENDATION OF POLICY AND PROCEDURE. HOWEVER, THE ULTIMATE LEGAL AUTHORITY AND RESPONSIBILITY REST WITH THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES AND ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICERS. AT GROSSMONT, THE SYSTEM OPERATES THROUGH A STRUCTURE OF STANDING COMMITTEES, COMPOSED PRIMARILY OF INSTRUCTORS AND CHAIRED BY ADMINISTRATORS. THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE IS CHAIRED BY THE DEAN OF INSTRUCTION AND IS COMPOSED OF DEPARTMENT CHAIRMEN. THE GUIDANCE COMMITTEE IS MADE UP OF COUNSELORS. AN ELECTED STUDENT REPRESENTATIVE SITS ON THE ASSEMBLIES AND CULTURAL EVENTS COMMITTEE. THOUGH APPOINTMENTS ARE MADE BY THE COLLEGE PRESIDENT, THE SELECTIONS FOLLOW A LOGICAL PATTERN. THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE WORK OF THE COMMITTEE STRUCTURE AND ITS DEMOCRATIC OPERATION IS DEMONSTRATED IN THE EXECUTIVE COUNCIL'S DEVELOPMENT OF THE DEPARTMENTAL ADMINISTRATIVE STRUCTURE AND IN THE ESTABLISHMENT OF THE EVALUATION SYSTEM AND CRITERIA BY THE CURRICULUM AND INSTRUCTION COMMITTEE. (HS)

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# STRUCTURE AS A DETERMINANT OF DEMOCRATIC ADMINISTRATION

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In this essay the rather simple but fundamental assumption is made that the degree of operational democracy within a junior college, and by extension any school or college, is largely dependent upon the kind of organizational structure which is established.(3) The point is argued that one should look to the adoption of democratic mechanics at the very inception of the college and if this is carefully done limits are set on the possibilities for undemocratic behavior by autocratic administrators or tyrannical faculty cliques or vociferous outside pressure groups or militant teacher organizations or staffs infected with academic anarchism. The premise that democracy must be based on law (perhaps policy is a more accurate word in the college microcosm) is accepted but secondary to the truism that the mechanics for creating that policy must precede it. If the law is given from Mount Sinai, it may be good but it is not democratic.

This last statement, aside from its feather ruffling possibilities, requires some clarification which because of the space factor will be stated as a second assumption, a given, not something to be argued. Democratic operation of the instructional program of a college harnesses the maximum amount of talent and wisdom, tends to reduce frustration, dissension and discord, maximizes identification, i.e., it becomes "our" program rather than "his" program, and creates an atmosphere most conducive to effective instruction. The point being made here is that democratic operation is justifiable on pragmatic bases and need not rely on historical authority or emotional commitment or popular endorsement.

If these assumptions are accepted, then attention can be turned to the structure or mechanics which will undergird the democratic development of the college in general and the instructional program in particular. If these assumptions are rejected there is no reason to read further since neither

conclusive evidence nor unassailable logic will be presented as proof of their validity.

The structure or mechanics to be described is that developed at Grossmont College. This two-year old California public junior college is paradigm for two practical reasons: 1) the author knows about it from intimate experience and 2) its short life obviates any possibility of demonstrating either ultimate truth or falsity of the first and primary assumption. To reiterate, the question is this: If democratic operation is assumed to depend on organizational structure and if democratic operation is assumed to be of pragmatic value, then what organizational structure, framework, mechanics should be established?

Put in a long sentence, the answer to this question is a communication system which has formal recognition whereby the staff has a maximum opportunity for the initiation or recommendation of policy and procedure but where the political reality is recognized by all that ultimate legal authority and responsibility rests with the board of trustees acting through their appointees, the administrative officers of the college. An obvious qualification to the above statement is that board, administrators and faculty may only act within the boundaries established by the state legislature which, in California, are unfortunately becoming increasingly narrow.

The mouthpiece of this communication system at Grossmont College is the standing committee structure.(5) In all instances the majority of members on these committees are instructors, although with one exception administrators sit on the committees, most often as permanent chairmen. The key committees are these: 1) The Executive Council which cuts across all functions and concerns itself with all policies and procedures not specifically delegated to other committees. It is chaired by the President of the College and includes the Deans of Instruction, Admissions and Guidance, and Student Affairs

as well as faculty representatives from each of the other key committees plus the Faculty Association President and the Professional Relations Committee Chairman. 2) The Curriculum and Instruction Committee, chaired by the Dean of Instruction and composed of the department chairmen of each instructional area, initiates all curricular additions, deletions or changes and concerns itself with all aspects of instruction including that of evaluation. 3) The Guidance Committee is chaired by the Dean of Admissions and Guidance and includes the counseling staff plus a committee majority of classroom instructors. It addresses itself to all questions pertaining to the guidance program, reviews and suggests projects for its sub-committee on institutional research and acts as a petitions committee for student appeals on admission, probation, disqualification, graduation, etc. 4) The Assemblies and Cultural Events Committee is headed by the Dean of Student Affairs and is composed of those faculty members most active in the lively arts plus the Dean of Instruction. This group initiates and gives direction to all of the "extras" of a political or cultural nature which the college presents to the assembled students and to the wider community. An elected student representative sits on this committee, as is true with the less important Athletic Committee, and as is now being considered for all committees. This committee, like the one to be mentioned next, often finds itself in a cross-fire of community pressures since, for example, some group is bound to label a series of Ingmar Bergman films as immoral and socialistic or object to engaging Irish Ambassador to the U. N. Boland as a speaker since the U. N. is part of the international conspiracy for communism. 5) The Library Services Committee is chaired by the College Librarian and besides the President and Dean of Instruction includes the Assistant Librarian and six instructors. Most of its tasks include routine policy decisions on library matters but when tempests over censorship arise,

as with the Wentworth and Flexner Dictionary of American Slang, this committee is at the very center of the storm. 6) The Professional Relations Committee is the exception previously noted where administrators are off-limits. It is a grievance committee of sorts which is elected by the membership of the Faculty Association to present and attempt to work out personnel matters which some individual or group finds galling.

The faculty members of these standing committees are appointed by the Grossmont College President. At first blush this seems a little less than representative but closer examination tends to dispel suspicion. The Curriculum and Instruction Committee logically should be composed of the department chairmen hence its membership is predetermined. The Guidance Committee should include all counselors so half of its membership is automatically selected. The Executive Council is made up of a representative from each of the other committees plus the administrative staff which assures comprehensive representation. The fact is that all authority and responsibility legally rests with the appointed administrator of the board of trustees.(1) Be that as it may, democratic operation of the college depends on establishment by the appointed administrator of the mechanics for the free flow of ideas not on whether membership to the committees is appointive or elective.

The early creation of this committee structure served as an earnest of the President's democratic intent and resulted in the development of the attitude that committee meetings were an arena for unrestrained debate and struggle but also with an early tradition of gracious bowing to eventual majority decision. The recognition that basic policy and procedure are largely determined by faculty decision contributes to acceptance of a strong and decisive administrative hand operating within the framework of the policies and procedures agreed upon in committee. Except for the usual contingent of

administration-phobes, most faculty members don't really want to be saddled with time-consuming administrative detail and for obvious reasons want to avoid the personal conflicts and unpleasantness that are an inevitable part of the execution of policy. They want and should have a voice in the creation of the law (policy) and the procedure by which it will be enforced. If this obtains, then in most instances they give support and approval to its being administered in a firm, consistent, even tough-minded fashion by the administrative officers of the college.

The committee as an agent for group action has been maligned, e.g., by inane jokes of the ilk that camels are horses constructed by a committee. The thoughtless people who make this cheap criticism should consider that the alternatives are either autocratic power in the hands of one person or the interminable process of securing consensus from the entire group, whether it be faculty or any other large and long-winded assemblage.

The committee system in schools and colleges has often been democratic window dressing assigned to deal with trivia and encroaching on the teacher's time in the process. When such a situation prevails, disenchantment is bound to follow but the fact is that this is not inherent in the committee structure. To repeat the basic premise, if the structure or mechanic exits, democratically inclined people can easily shift the control from trivia to matters of significance. This was not necessary at Grossmont College for the administration early adopted the strategy of strong administrative execution of policies and procedures enjoying the wide support that comes with involvement of the staff in their creation. Two rather long and key examples will be used to demonstrate this point: 1) The development of the departmental administrative sub-structure by the Executive Council, and 2) The definition and ground rules for evaluation of instruction by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee.

Delineation of the need for some kind of administration of the instructional program beyond that possible by the Dean of Instruction was made to the Executive Council by the Grossmont College administrative staff. The task of gathering information on the precedents set by other junior colleges was also done by administration.(4) A sub-committee of the Executive Council was appointed to make a preliminary study on the relative merits of three major possibilities: a) additional sssistant deans, b) division chiefs, and c) departmental chairmen. This sub-committee reported back to the Executive Council listing first the assumptions from which they operated, then the duties which they saw incumbent on the department chairmen, next their rationale for a departmental rather than a divisional structure and finally a recommendation of departments and recompense for the departmental chairmen. After rather exhaustive debate

the Executive Council forwarded with endorsement by the College and District administration this analysis and recommendation to the Grossmont College Board of Trustees:(6)

I. Assumptions and Their Implications

A. The instructional program is the raison d'etre of Grossmont College; all else is peripheral.
The organizational structure which will contribute most to the improvement of instruction should be selected even if budget sacrifices must be made in other areas to sustain it.

B. A district with a poor tax base should be the last to commit the extravagance of excessive superstructure.
A lean administrative structure can operate with greater dispatch and effectiveness and presents a smaller target for criticism and grousing.

C. Release of top quality teachers from instruction to perform tasks that could be done by clerks is wasteful of talent and money.
Close scrutiny should be made of the functions so that the routine and clerical should be pared to the minimum.

D. Administration of the instructional program on a temporal basis is patently absurd when in objectives and philosophy it is stated that the Evening Division is an integral part of the instructional offering of the college.
Those charged with administration of the curriculum have equal responsibility to look to the classes presented after dark as to those presented in full daylight.

E. Basing any table of organization on size alone is to disregard other criteria which should often have equal if not greater weighting.
More work is often required in the organizational phase when size is small than in the maintenance stage when the size may be doubled or tripled.

F. A quality instructor consumes all available work time in validating this adjective "quality" hence cannot have other duties added without subtracting somewhere.
Supervisors of instruction should therefore not have added duties for added money but rather should have instructional load reduced to compensate for the new tasks.

G. All people are not equally endowed with interest or aptitude in administrative work; further, it often takes time to build confidence, loyalty and commitment to a long term program of curricular development.
The duties contemplated for department chairmen involve them in administration. This argues against short or rotating or elective tenure for the department chairmen.

II. Duties and Functions

A. The area supervisor would be responsible to and would work closely with the President and the Dean of Instruction in the performance of the following tasks:

1. Determination of the courses, the instructors to teach them and the number of sections to be presented in any given semester.
2. Preparation of the preliminary budget and arbitration of compromises on the allocation of limited funds.
3. Appraisal of prospective staff members within the supervisor's instructional area for both the Day and Evening Divisions.
4. Evaluation of probationary and tenured instructors toward the major end of improvement of instruction. Determination of retention or dismissal will rest with the President but evaluation by department chairmen may be requested.
5. Representation of the instructional area on the Curriculum and Instruction Committee.
6. Reappraisal of the curricular offerings within the area and their relationships to the general education commitment of Grossmont College.
7. Provision of leadership in the development of the textual and audio-visual library for his particular instructional area.
8. Administration of a sound substitution system whereby any loss in the instructional hour due to absence will be minimized.
9. Reduction of personnel problems within the department and the provision of arbitration services when they do occur.
10. Coordination of all aspects of instruction with the corresponding departments within the District high schools. Development of liaison with colleagues in the state colleges and

universities to avoid friction but at the same time to prevent violation of the objectives of the junior college.

11. Participation in a public relations program that would foster the community college concept and tie the citizenry to Grossmont College with the strong bonds of identification.
12. Perform all other duties assigned.

III. Appointment

A. These departments should be formed as necessity dictates and as qualified and interested personnel become available. The instructional areas within a department may be broader and greater in number until such time as they are shifted to newly created departments. Until a department is formed, instructors in areas not covered by existing departments will be under the direct supervision of the Dean of Instruction.

B. Upon the formation of a department, the President will appoint a Department Chairman for an indefinite tenure and, within the guidelines established, will assign the instructional areas that are to fall within his responsibility.

IV. Proposed Grossmont College Departmental Structure 1963-64

A. Departments with released time for department chairmen both semesters:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Business and Economics | * FTE-Contract | 6.3 |
| | FTE-Hourly | 3.0 |
| English (incl. Journalism & Humanities) | FTE-Contract | 8.3 |
| | FTE-Hourly | 2.6 |
| Physical Education & Health Education | FTE-Contract | 5.9 |
| | FTE-Hourly | .5 |
| Physical Science, Math & Engineering | FTE-Contract | 6.0 |
| | FTE-Hourly | 3.2 |

B. Departments with released time for department chairmen spring semester only:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Art | FTE-Contract | 2.0 |
| | FTE-Hourly | .3 |
| Biological Science | FTE-Contract | 3.0 |
| | FTE-Hourly | .9 |
| Drama and Speech | FTE-Contract | 3.2 |
| | FTE-Hourly | 1.2 |
| Foreign Language | FTE-Contract | 2.0 |
| | FTE-Hourly | .5 |
| Social Science | FTE-Contract | 4.0 |
| | FTE-Hourly | 2.0 |

C. Departments with no released time for the department chairmen:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Home Economics | FTE-Contract | .4 |
| | FTE-Hourly | .3 |
| Music | FTE-Contract | 1.4 |
| | FTE-Hourly | 1.0 |

*Full-time teacher equivalent.

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Philosophy and Behavioral Science (Dean of Instruction to chair this department) | * FTE-Contract | 2.0 |
| | FTE-Hourly | 2.0 |

D. Technical-vocational courses to be within the province of the Director of Technical Education. If budget and other factors dictate, this person could serve initially as chairman of the Physical Science, Mathematics, and Engineering Department.

*Full-time teacher equivalent.

After full discussion of this recommendation, with realistic recognition that the release time factor would cost the District well over the cost of two additional assistant deans even in the first year of operation, the Grossmont College Board of Trustees gave formal approval to this Executive Council proposal in their meeting of May 6, 1963. Since then most department chairmen have been appointed, hence Grossmont College will begin its third year of existence with a rather complete administrative framework for the operation and improvement of the instructional program.

The second example of determination of policy and procedure in a crucial area by one of the standing committees is that of definition and establishment of criteria of evaluation by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. Discussion of the ramifications of this highly-charged subject consumed the better part of a semester of the Curriculum and Instruction Committee meeting once weekly. The "Statement on Evaluation" which was finally hammered out was referred to the Executive Council for review and was then given endorsement by the assembled faculty. This statement appears as the official position on evaluation in the 1963-64 Grossmont College Faculty Handbook.(5)

> Evaluation of the instructional program has as its major aim the improvement of instruction; hence it should have many levels. It should be frequent, it should be continuous, it should be as anxiety reducing as possible and should have only on rare occasions the objective of decision on retention or dismissal of the probationary teacher.

The three basic levels of evaluation should be these: 1. Evaluation of the total college curriculum by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee with a focusing in on any one area or subject that has been recommended for addition, deletion or change. 2. Evaluation of the content and objectives of any one course in light of the aims of the particular department and of the philosophy of Grossmont College. Logic and techniques of presentation, textual materials used, methods of student evaluation and grading standards and procedures would all be aspects of this level of evaluation. Much of this would be self evaluation by the departmental staffs under the leadership of the department chairman. Inter-departmental coordination would be evaluated by the department chairmen sitting in committee with the Dean of Instruction. 3. Evaluation of the effectiveness of the instructor, the third level of evaluation, would be a function shared by the department chairman, the Dean of Instruction and the President. Again the approach would be one of helping the instructor to build on his strengths, become aware of correctable weaknesses and to open his eyes to the unconscious errors of mannerisms, etc., that almost all instructors have.

The responsibility of decision on retention or dismissal will rest with the Dean of Instruction and the President although they would have the option to ask for the recommendation of the department chairman.

The categories of evaluative concern would include at least those listed below although the form used in the written report would be open ended and not restricted to these categories:

1. Command of the specific subject matter.
2. Evidence of depth of general education.
3. Thoroughness of preparation for the class hour.
4. Logic of presentation of the subject content.
5. Relationship of content to the course objectives and to the general education commitment of the college.
6. Method and clarity of approach.
7. Style of presentation and other personal factors.
8. Sensitivity to student reaction and other aspects of relationships with the students.
9. Incidental points worthy of note.
10. Recommendations for improvement.

Category number five in particular, and good personnel practice in general, would point to the wisdom of having a preparatory discussion with the instructor prior to the classroom visit and an evaluation conference after the visit.

Considerations in the Evaluation of Teachers Apart from Classroom Performance:

1. Participation in and support of general college program. Views departmental needs and interest in terms of total program.
2. Prompt, accurate submission of all necessary college reports. Compliance with necessary college administrative procedures.

3. Willingness to serve as a member of regular and ad hoc committees of the college.
4. Participation in activities of professional organizations.
5. Assumption of responsibility to provide appropriate assistance in the furtherance of the college's co-curricular activity program.
6. Interest in students as individuals and a willingness to give them any reasonable assistance during out-of-class hours. Cooperation with counseling personnel in furtherance of best interests of students.
7. Recognition of the college's community services nature and willingness; therefore, to serve as a participant in the college speakers bureau; judge for speech, music, art and other community contests; consultant for civic projects, etc.
8. Maintenance of high standards of personal appearance and conduct.
9. Observance of those forms, convention, and amenities which will contribute to the well-being and good name of the profession and of the college.

In this paper the position has been taken that democratic operation of a college need not be justified by pious platitudes; the pragmatic values argue the case for democratic action. Within the limitations inherent in the state legislature's delegation of authority and responsibility to the board of trustees and in turn to their administrative appointees, an opinion has been ventured here that the formal structure or mechanics of communication are all important in determining the degree of democratic involvement of the professional staff. The committee structure at Grossmont College was presented as an example of how the mechanic provides the means by which the democratic process can operate. The significance of the work of the committee structure and the democratic operation thereof was demonstrated in the development of the departmental administrative structure by the Grossmont College Executive Council and in the establishment of the evaluation system and criteria by the Curriculum and Instruction Committee. No attempt was made to prove that structure or mechanic alone would guarantee academic democracy. As a matter of opinion, an unregenerate authoritarian personality sitting in the chair of the president or superintendent could probably find ways to circumvent the

democratic flow made possible by a powerful committee structure. However, unless he had the power and were willing to make the struggle to abolish the committee structure, the mechanic would remain to mitigate his autocratic rule and would undoubtedly become the means of his eventual un-horsing.

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